

# MarinTrust Improver Programme: NE Atlantic Blue Whiting Milestone Report End Year 1

This document focus on the milestones that make up the Fishery Action Plan (FAP) as part of the Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) aligned to the MarinTrust Assessment criteria.

<b>FIP name</b>	NE Atlantic Blue Whiting
<b>Milestone</b>	Year 1
<b>Management authority (Country/State)</b>	The North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC). The European Union and the fisheries ministries of Faroe Islands, Iceland, Norway and the UK
<b>Date</b>	September 30, 2022
<b>Developed by</b>	Ivan Martinez-Tovar, Ocean Outcomes

<b>Outcome of Assessment</b>	
<b>Milestone</b>	Year 1
<b>Sections with milestones</b>	A-3 Harvest strategies
<b>Date</b>	September 30, 2022
<b>Developed by</b>	Ivan Martinez-Tovar, Ocean Outcomes

## Context

Participants of the blue whiting fishery in the North-East Atlantic have been working for over a decade following the standards of the MSC program. Different sourcing areas were certified, including fishery components from Iceland, Denmark (Faroe Islands), the UK, Ireland, and Norway. The approval of those certifications was conditioned on implementing an international management plan that ensure catches remained within scientific advice. However, by 2014, the international agreement on quota shares was still an issue, and despite the fact that multiple Units of Certification (UoC) achieved MSC

recognition, the fact that an agreement on quota designation was not achieved, the blue whiting MSC certifications were suspended.

For this reason, the North Atlantic Pelagic Advocacy Group launched the market-led approach to improving North Atlantic pelagic fisheries management. As a first step, the partners evaluated the fishery against the MarinTrust standard in 2021, providing the basis for the fishery action plan. This report evaluates the four actions and milestones created and put in place to improve the fishery gaps identified during that assessment. Which were focused on the

## Details on species designations

The fishery catch composition is made mostly by blue whiting, with 98% or more of the catch with pelagic gears. Therefore, it was considered that blue whiting is the only Type 1 species caught in the fishery and was assessed under Category A.

For the type 2 species, the catch composition data for purse seines indicated that the catch is effectively 100% blue whiting. While the EU & UK reports indicated no other species making up 0.1% or more of the catch with any pelagic trawl gears. In the case of Faroese and Norwegian reports, these did indicate the possible presence of Type 2 species in small quantities, which are listed below:

- Herring (*Clupea harengus*) – Norwegian spring-spawning – Category C
- Mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*) – North East Atlantic – Category C
- Norway pout (*Trisopterus esmarkii*) – North East Atlantic – Category C
- Saithe (*Pollachius virens*) – Faroes and North Sea stocks – Category C
- Lesser silver smelt (*Argentina sphyraena*) – North East Atlantic – Category D

## Gap Analysis and Improvement actions

The assessment and gap analysis identified the need to improve the factor **A-3 – Harvest Strategy. In particular, A3.2:**

*“Total fishery removals of this species do not regularly exceed the level indicated or stated in the stock assessment. Where a specific quantity of removals is recommended, the actual removals may exceed this by up to 10% ONLY if the stock status is above the limit reference point or proxy”.*

The action plan included four actions aiming to fulfil this gap. This report reviewed the status of the implementation of those actions.

## IP Milestone report

Use the below tables to provide an update on actions in the Fishery Action Plan, with links to relevant evidence documents. Additional lines may be added where necessary.

### M – Management Framework and Surveillance, Control and Enforcement

MT clause (if relevant)	Action in plan	Action update	Progress against milestones	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action
N /A						

### Category A: Data Collection, Stock Assessment, Harvest Strategy, and Stock Status

#### A-3 Harvest Strategy - Minimum Requirements

MT clause (if relevant)	Action in plan	Action update	Progress against milestones	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action
A- 3.2 Total fishery removals of this species do not regularly exceed the level indicated or stated in the stock	1. Engagement to Ensure Robust Harvest Strategies Adopted and Implemented	NAPA have been actively engaged with different fishery stakeholders. Using different and multiple approaches. The main goal has been to align the vision that inaction	M 1.1. Lobby all parties in seeking a joint solution of a long-term management plan, highlighting the market consequences of inaction.	M 1.1. An Op-ed was published in Iceland & Norway to call into action. In addition, in person participation on forum such as the Arctic Circle 2021 coordinated by the MSC allowed the movement to raise awareness. In preparation for the	1. <a href="#">Op-ed</a> calling for sea change in pelagic management  <a href="#">Participation</a> in forum "Sharing is caring" During the <a href="#">Arctic Circle Forum</a>	Ongoing

<p>assessment. Where a specific quantity of removals is recommended, the actual removals may exceed this by up to 10% ONLY if the stock status is above the limit reference point or proxy.</p>		<p>on improving harvest strategies (in particular those related to TAC allocation) will have severe consequences on the resources' availability. From post on social media, organizational statements, magazine articles to, direct communication with state representatives, as well as participation on public and private forums and events (e.g. during negotiations for TACs), the goal is to promote dialogue and generate momentum to improve the management and align the vision</p>	<p>M 1.2 During negotiations for TACs and sharing arrangements, arrange meetings with catching sector ("roundtable") to encourage a management solution.</p> <p>M 1.3. Continue communication with Coastal States representatives to</p>	<p>sector roundtable in March 2022, information was shared in advance to coastal states for discussions. The need to change the status quo gained momentum with industry partners that share public commitments.</p> <p>M 1.2. During the March roundtable meeting, 8 organizations from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Ireland, Netherlands and Iceland attended. Including the Aldi South Group presented, noting the importance for the management of the fisheries to improved.</p> <p>A further roundtable meeting took place in September. Catching sector reps from Ireland and the European</p>	<p>Pack information shared previous to Roundtable meeting.</p> <p>47 sourcing <a href="#">statements from industry partners</a>.</p> <p>March &amp; September 2022 roundtable slides attached.</p> <p><a href="#">Aldi South Group</a> presented at the European Sustainable Fisheries Management</p> <p>Danish Pelagic Producers Organisation submitted a letter of support for the FIP (attached)</p>	
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		<p>among all stakeholders. The message has been appropriately shared, and more industry has been actively engaging in the efforts.</p>	<p>promote adherence to exploitation levels consistent with the requirements of Principle 1.</p>	<p>Association of Pelagic Organisations attended, along with several NAPA Partners. The discussion focussed on NAPA's view on collective responsibility – indicating that the market pressure is working. Organisations are eager to distinguish themselves from each other.</p> <p>M 1.3. The Coastal States meeting concluded with agreement to follow ICES scientific advice when setting TACs. In addition, both levels of overfishing and lack of sharing arrangement were recognized as concerning factors, and three Coastal State working groups were established to create or update reports on the spatial distribution for</p>	<p><a href="#">Agreement to follow ICES scientific advice</a></p> <p><a href="#">40th NEAFC</a> meeting, November 2021.</p> <p><a href="#">NAPA's opening statement at NEAFC</a></p> <p><a href="#">"Decoding the coastal States"</a> statement. November 2021</p> <p>Statement on <a href="#">concerns about quota allocations</a>. January 2022.</p> <p><a href="#">EU pelagic industry condemns Faroe Islands-Russia blue whiting</a> arrangement, April 2022</p> <p>Announcement of NAPA as a Global Innovation Award</p>	
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				<p>each stock (October 2021). The next meeting was scheduled for early 2022. During the NEAFC meeting in November, measures were adopted for mackerel, blue whiting and ASH and traditional catch level for blue whiting for Russia and Greenland (7.69%) was ratified. But concerns were raised by several delegations regarding the status of the stocks (e.g., UK), and the need to finding a solution on allocations (e.g., Denmark). NAPA made an opening statement calling for delegates to follow the advice, employ management plans, address allocations, and released the "De-coding the coastal States" statement (November 2021). However, previous to the sharing</p>	<p>finalist. <a href="#">Example</a> of press coverage.</p>	
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				<p>discussions, several Coastal states published allocations and NAPA published a statement criticizing these actions (January 2022) Official sharing discussion took place in March 2022 and NAPA was invited to participate in the plenary. In preparation to this, meetings with the UK, Iceland, Greenland and Russia delegations were organized, and concerns were discussed.</p> <p>NAPA was a finalist in the inaugural Global Fisheries Innovation award</p>		
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	<p>2. Dispute settlement legal framework and consultation processes</p>	<p>NAPA released a document with a series of recommendations that include the urgency to agree and implement an allocation mechanism for the NE Atlantic mackerel, Atlanto-Scandian herring and blue whiting; to adopt NEAFC Guidelines for Coastal State Consultations in the NE Atlantic in their discussions, and consider a cap on catching in international waters to constrain further overfishing. The document has been the main tool for conversations with coastal states to motivate support on this endeavour.</p>	<p>M 2.1 NAPA reviews and produces a document summarizing the coastal states' and NEAFC's dispute settlement protocols.</p> <p>M 2.2 Lobby a coastal state (i.e., UK) to initiate negotiations for a mechanism, for cooperation and dispute resolution between the Coastal States which is effective in agreeing an appropriate management mechanism consistent with the management plan.</p>	<p>NAPA prepared and shared an options paper converted into a position paper used in advocacy. That was used by the media and published along different platforms (press statements). This same document was circulated to all Coastal States and some positive responses received were received from fisheries ministers of the UK and Iceland, that prompted in meetings with these two coastal states where both countries shared the complexity of the task. Most recently, NAPA released a statement alarmed by the decisions of the Norwegian and Faroese governments to ignore calls for cooperation and set unilateral quotas June 2022.</p>	<p><a href="#">NAPA position statement</a></p> <p>UK and Iceland Minister responses [attached]</p> <p><a href="#">Press Statements</a></p> <p><a href="#">Fish focus press note</a></p> <p><a href="#">The Fishing Daily press note</a></p> <p><a href="#">Undercurrent press note March 2022</a></p> <p><a href="#">Napa statement, June 2022</a></p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
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	<p>3. Effective decision-making processes</p>	<p>NAPA has been actively using different channels to promote the importance of improving the decision-making process. From publicly identifying the interest from different countries and companies that supply from the fishery. To continue lobbying with coastal representatives about the market benefits of pursuing these new mechanisms.</p>	<p>M 3.1 During negotiations for TACs and sharing arrangements, arrange meetings with the catching sector (“roundtable”) to encourage a more precautionary management solution for 2022.</p> <p>Communication to continue with Coastal States representatives to promote responsive and precautionary decision-making, particularly regarding TACs.</p>	<p>Previous to the roundtable meeting, NAPA published a social media short film (December 2021) and released a statement noting the global importance of the fisheries, highlighting the participation of global members (January 2022) (March 2022).</p> <p>In addition, and following the media noise generated by the spillage of 100,000 tonnes of blue whiting, NAPA brought attention to the fact that lack of effective processes, this spillage represented a small proportion when compared with overfishing.</p> <p>It was during the Coastal States sharing discussions (February 2022) where comments</p>	<p><a href="#">Short film</a> launched previous to the Coastal States sharing discussions</p> <p><a href="#">Press statement</a> January 2022</p> <p><a href="#">Press statement</a> March 2022</p> <p><a href="#">Press note</a> about the overfishing occurring in the fishery.</p> <p><a href="#">Press statement</a>, May 2022</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
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				<p>regarding potential agreements were shared. Although there was no clarity on when this could happen. The UK &amp; Faroes confirmed their participation to a NAPA Partner meeting April in their roles as WG Chairs. However, on May 2022, NAPA released a statement when learned that despite the ongoing sharing discussions, the Faroese Ministry of Fisheries independently confirmed their quotas for blue whiting, and joined the EU, UK, and Norway in setting Atlanto-Scandian herring quotas, and the UK and Norway in setting blue whiting quotas despite the continuing discussions.</p>		
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	4. Ensure KDE information is collected on vessels supplying MarinTrust factories	This action is aim to start later on the project	By year 3 ensure KDEs for whole fish are - fishing vessel(s), species, catch area and date of landings			Pending
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### B – Category B Stock Status

MT clause (if relevant)	Action in plan	Action update	Progress against milestones	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action
N / A						

### C – Category C Stock Status

MT clause (if relevant)	Action in plan	Action update	Progress against milestones	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action
N / A						

### D – Impacts on Species Categorized as Vulnerable by D1-D3

MT clause (if relevant)	Action in plan	Action update	Progress against milestones	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action
N / A						

### F – Impacts on ETP Species, Impacts on Habitats and Ecosystem Impacts

MT clause (if relevant)	Action in plan	Action update	Progress against milestones	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action
N / A						

### SOCIAL CRITERION

MT clause (if relevant)	Action in plan	Action update	Progress against milestones	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action
N / A						

### Milestone reporting template

MarinTrust Fishery Assessment Section		Initial score	Immediate (6 months)	End of Year 1	End of Year 2	End of Year 3	Status notes
Date							
M1	M1.1	Projected					No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual					
	M1.2	Projected					No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual					
	M1.3	Projected					No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual					
	M1.4	Projected					No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual					

	M1.5	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						
	M1.6	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						
M 2	M2.1	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						
	M2.2	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						
	M2.3	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						
	M2.4	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						
A1	A1.1	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						
	A1.2	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						
A2	A2.1	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						
	A2.2	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						
	A2.3	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						
	A2.4	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						
	A2.5	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						
A3	A3.1	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator

		Actual						
	A3.2	Projected						Despite the efforts, commitments and discussions made by Coastal States in October 2021 <sup>1</sup> , several states, including the Faroes Islands, the UK and Norway set their blue whiting quotas previous to the schedule discussions <sup>2</sup> . The Faroes increment brought the catch total to 130% of the ICES advice for the species. This indicator was scored using the KPI 1 explained in the Work plan, that stated that by the end of year 1 there has been a significant reduction in the difference between the combined TAC and scientific advice when compared to the long-term average of 25% which was not achieved.
		Actual						
	A3.3	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						
A4	A4.1	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						
F1	F1.1	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						
	F1.2	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						
	F1.3	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						
F2	F2.1	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						
	F2.2	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						
	F2.3	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator

<sup>1</sup> European Union, Faroe Islands, Iceland, Norway and the United Kingdom - Blue whiting in the North-East Atlantic for 2022 ([https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/fisheries/international-agreements/northern-agreements\\_en#multilateral-agreement---coastal-states](https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/fisheries/international-agreements/northern-agreements_en#multilateral-agreement---coastal-states))

<sup>2</sup> <https://thefishingdaily.com/latest-news/eu-pelagic-industry-condemns-faroe-islands-russia-blue-whiting-arrangement/>

		Actual						
F3	F3.1	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						
	F3.2	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						
	F3.3	Projected						No significant changes to rescored this indicator
		Actual						

### Additional Information

The following section highlights any information provided by the fishery in support of this Milestone Report which does not relate directly to any of the Milestones above, but which is relevant to the ongoing monitoring of fishery management status.

### Amended timeline

The following section allows the applicant to explain if there are any amendments to the improvement timelines and provide the reasons and evidence for this.

Despite the setback on 2022, when several coastal states move forward and set their quotas previous the sharing discussions. The level of commitment and attention that the project is gaining reaffirm the confidence that current timeline can be achieved. It will be really important to continue adding the market pressure that tend to be effective on fisheries like the Blue whiting case.